



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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National Public Lands Day!

Fees waived for a day, Saturday, Sep. 24, 2011

The National Park Service routinely offers designated days to the public when the typical vehicle entrance fee is waived.

The entrance fee will be waved again on Public Lands Day, an annual national holiday that will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24.

With the perk of having three national parks close to Fresno, the free entrance should serve as another motivator for students to visit them. Yosemite National Park, known largely for its enormous waterfalls, is only a two-hour drive north from Fresno. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are a quicker one-hour drive east on Highway 180.

“We are generally a place where you can come and play all year round,” public affairs specialist for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Dana Dierkes said.

There are plenty of activities for students to enjoy in these National Parks, including camping, hiking, swimming, snowboarding and skiing during the snow season.

Aside from those activities, some people visit these parks just to take in the natural wonders.

Yosemite National Park is home to the tallest waterfall in North America, Yosemite Falls, which stands 2,425 feet above the valley floor. El Capitan, the world’s largest granite monolith, is also found in Yosemite.

Mount Whitney, which is the highest point in the 48 contiguous states, is found in Sequoia National Park. The largest natural giant sequoia grove in the world can be found in Kings Canyon National Park.

Attendance so far this year has generally been on track with last year’s numbers. Dierkes said that about 1.6 million people visit the Sequoia and Kings Canyon Parks each year. She added that statistics this year from January through July show that the parks’ visitation increased about two percent at Sequoia and decreased about seven percent at Kings Canyon.


Yosemite National Park spokeswoman Kari Cobb said from January through July of this year Yosemite has seen about 2.2 million visitors.

“Compared to last year at this same time we are roughly one percent below our visitation last year,” Cobb said.

The park had over 730,000 visitors, which is the most the park has ever had during that month.

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“We expect that we will be right on track to hit four million visitors again,” Cobb said, referring to the yearly average attendance at Yosemite.

Cobb said the purpose of fee-free days is to show the public that national parks are public lands and are there for everyone to enjoy. “It is a way for the National Park Service to give back to the public for their support and love of the national parks,” Cobb said.

Some fee-free days this year were Jan. 15 through Jan. 18 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and June 21 to mark the first day of summer.

Jacob De Oliveira, a freshman at Fresno State, has only lived in Fresno since the beginning of the fall semester. He said he was unaware that three national parks were so close to Fresno, but he probably won’t head to any of them on Public Lands Day.

“I knew about the ski resort,” De Oliveira said. “If it was a big family thing or a bunch of friends that went out camping for a day or two, then maybe.”

“It was very relaxing,” said Chelsie Phomas, a Fresno State senior who visited Sequoia National Park last summer with her family.

She said she enjoyed her visit to the park and wants to make another trip for Public Lands Day, but she also wants to visit one of the other parks.

“I would really like to see Yosemite,” Phomas said.

The National Park Service will waive the entrance fee again Nov. 11 through Nov. 13 in recognition of Veteran’s Day.

For more information about Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, visit www.nps.gov/seki or call (559) 565-3341.

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